

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

PAUL STERLING,

Plaintiff,
v. _____
Civil Action No. _____

MERCANTILE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU, LLC,

Defendant.

COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action for actual and statutory damages brought in response to Defendant's violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 *et seq.* (hereinafter "FDCPA") which prohibits debt collectors from engaging in abusive, deceptive, and unfair practices, and the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 (hereinafter referred to as the "TCPA").

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. Jurisdiction of this court arises under 15 U.S.C. §1692k(d), 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and 28 U.S.C. § 1337.
3. That Plaintiff's cause of action under the TCPA is predicated upon the same facts and circumstances that give rise to their federal cause of action. As such, this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's TCPA causes of action pursuant 28 U.S.C. §1367.
4. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) in that the Defendant transacts business here and the conduct complained of occurred here.

III. PARTIES

5. Plaintiff, Paul Sterling, is a natural person residing in the County of Erie and State of New York and is a "consumer" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(3).

6. Defendant, Mercantile Adjustment Bureau, LLC, (hereinafter "Mercantile"), is a domestic limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York and is a "debt collector" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(6).
7. That at all times relevant herein, Plaintiff was and is a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. §153(32).
8. That Defendant, at all times relevant herein, owned, operated and/or controlled "customer premises equipment" as defined by 47 U.S.C. §153(14), that originated, routed, and/or terminated telecommunications.
9. That at all times relevant herein, Defendant has used the United States mail service, telephone, telegram and other instrumentalities of interstate and intrastate commerce to attempt to collect consumer debt allegedly owed to another.
10. That Defendant, at all times relevant herein, engaged in "interstate communications" as that term is defined by 47 U.S.C. §153(22).
11. That Defendant, at all times relevant herein, engaged in "telecommunications" as defined by 47 U.S.C. §153(43).
12. That Defendant, at all times relevant herein, used, controlled and/or operated "wire communications" as defined by TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §153(52), that existed as instrumentalities of interstate and intrastate commerce.
13. That Defendant, at all relevant times herein, used, controlled and/or operated "automatic telephone dialing systems" as defined by TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §227(a)(1) and 47 C.F.R. 64.1200(f)(1).
14. The acts of the Defendant alleged hereinafter were performed by its employees acting within the scope of their actual or apparent authority.
15. Defendant regularly attempts to collect debts alleged to be due another.
16. All references to "Defendant" herein shall mean the Defendant or an employee of said Defendant.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

17. That upon information and belief, Plaintiff does not owe any debt.
18. That upon information and belief, Angie Jay owes a debt. This debt will be referred to as the "subject debt."

19. That the subject debt arose out of a transaction in which money, services or property, which was the subject of the transaction, was primarily for personal, family and/or household purposes. As such, said debt is a “debt” as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(5).
20. That Paul Sterling does not live with or know Angie Jay nor do they share a telephone number.
21. That upon information and belief, Defendant was employed by the original creditor or current account holder to collect on the subject debt.
22. That Defendant began calling Plaintiff’s cellular telephone in an attempt to collect the subject debt in March of 2011. From that time through present, Defendant called Plaintiff’s cellular telephone an excessive number of times. These calls were made multiple times per week, and often multiple times per day.
23. That during the months of March, 2011 through July, 2011, the Defendant made several telephone calls to Plaintiff’s cellular telephone, wherein they left an artificial and/or prerecorded voice message requesting return of their telephone call.
24. That Plaintiff answered some of the calls made to him by the Defendant. On each such occasion, Plaintiff requested that the Defendant cease and desist from any further telephone calls to his cellular telephone.
25. That during one of these aforementioned calls, the Plaintiff informed the Defendant that Angie Jay did not live at his residence, that he did not know any person named Angie Jay, and asked the Defendant to stop calling.
26. That despite the Plaintiff’s request to cease calling his cellular telephone, Defendant has continued to call the Plaintiff’s cellular telephone.
27. That upon information and belief, Defendant initiated most, if not all of the telephone calls described herein using an automated telephone dialing system and/or transmitted prerecorded voice messages and/or transmitted messages using an artificial voice.
28. That Defendant’s telephone calls described herein were made without the express consent of Plaintiff and/or after his oral requests that they stop calling him.
29. That as a result of Defendant’s acts Plaintiff became nervous, upset, anxious, and suffered from emotional distress.

V. COUNT ONE
(Fair Debt Collection Practices Act
and 15 U.S.C. §1692 et seq.)

30. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 29 above.
31. The conduct of Defendant as described in this complaint violated the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. §1692 et seq.) as follows:
32. Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §1692b(3), 15 U.S.C. §1692f, and 15 U.S.C. §1692d by contacting Plaintiff more once without being requested they do so. Despite being told that Plaintiff does not live with and does not know Angie Jay, Defendant continued to call Plaintiff. The natural consequence of such action was to harass, oppress, and abuse the Plaintiff, in an unfair unconscionable attempt to collect the subject debt.
33. Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §1692d, 15 U.S.C. §1692d(5), and 15 U.S.C. §1692f, by repeatedly causing Plaintiff's telephone to ring and repeatedly engaging Plaintiff in telephone conversations. The natural consequence of such action was to harass, oppress, and abuse the Plaintiff through an unfair and unconscionable attempt to collect the subject debt.
34. That as a result of the Defendant's FDCPA violations as alleged herein, Plaintiff became nervous, upset, anxious and suffered from emotional distress.

VI. COUNT TWO
(Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991
and 47 C.F.R.64.1200, et seq.)

35. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the preceding and succeeding paragraphs in this complaint as if each of them was reprinted herein below.
36. The Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, unfairly, unlawfully, intentionally, deceptively and/or fraudulently violated the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §227, et seq. and 47 C.F.R.14.1200, et seq. and TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §227(b)(1)(A)(iii) by initiating telephone calls to Plaintiffs cellular telephone using an automated telephone dialing system and/or using an artificial and/or prerecorded voice to deliver messages without having the consent of Plaintiff to leave such messages and/or after Plaintiff revoked said consent.
37. The acts and/or omissions of the Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, as described in this Complaint, were done unfairly, unlawfully, intentionally, deceptively and fraudulently and absent bona fide error, lawful right, legal defense, legal justification or legal excuse.

38. The acts and/or omissions of the Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, as described in this Complaint, were not acted or omitted pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §64.1200(f)(2).
39. As a causally-direct and legally proximate result of the above violations of the TCPA, the Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, as described in this Complaint, caused the Plaintiff to sustain damages as a result of their innumerable telephone calls that harassed, annoyed and abused Plaintiff, and disturbed her peace and tranquility at home and elsewhere.
40. As a causally-direct and legally proximate result of the above violations of the TCPA, the Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, as described in this Complaint, caused the Plaintiff to sustain damages and experience severe emotional distress.
41. As a causally-direct and legally proximate result of the above violations of the TCPA, the Defendant at all times material and relevant hereto, as described in this Complaint, is liable to actual damages, statutory damages, treble damages, and costs and attorneys fees.
42. Plaintiff received multiple telephone calls from an automatic telephone dialing system and/or an artificial and/or prerecorded voice entitling Plaintiff to Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$500.00) for each artificial and/or prerecorded telephone call pursuant to the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §227(b)(3)(B).
43. The Defendant caused said telephone calls of an artificial and/or prerecorded nature to be placed willfully and/or knowingly entitling each Plaintiff to a maximum of treble damages, pursuant to TCPA, 47 U.S.C. §227(b)(3)

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that judgment be entered against the Defendants for:

- (a) Actual damages;
- (b) Statutory damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k and 47 U.S.C. §223(b)(3)(B).
- (c) Treble statutory damages pursuant to 47 U.S.C. §227b(3).
- (d) Costs, disbursements and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.
- (e) For such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

VII. JURY DEMAND

Please take notice that Plaintiff demands trial by jury in this action.

Dated: July 25, 2011

/s/ Seth J. Andrews
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